



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/529,375	10/28/2005	Michael John Christensen	08059.0013	4788
22852	7590	04/21/2008		
FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW, GARRETT & DUNNER LLP 901 NEW YORK AVENUE, NW WASHINGTON, DC 20001-4413				
			EXAMINER MARX, IRENE	
			ART UNIT 1651	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 04/21/2008	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/529,375	Applicant(s) CHRISTENSEN ET AL.
	Examiner Irene Marx	Art Unit 1651

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If no period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED. (35 U.S.C. § 133).

Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 January 2008.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-29 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) 14-25,28 and 29 is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-13,26 and 27 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application

6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

The application should be reviewed for errors.

To facilitate processing of papers at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, it is recommended that the Application Serial Number be inserted on every page of claims and/or of amendments filed.

To conform with standard practice and for the sake of clarity, independent claims should be amended to start with --A-- and dependent claims to start with --The--.

Applicant's election without traverse electing to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-13 and 26-27 on 1/25/08 is acknowledged.

Claims 1-13 and 26-27 are being considered on the merits. Claims 14-25 and 28-29 are withdrawn from consideration as directed to a non-elected invention.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 1-13 and 26-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because this claim reads on the organism per se which is found in nature and thus, is unpatentable to applicant. Consequently, the claim does not embody patentable subject matter as defined in 35 USC 101. See, e.g., *American Wood v. Fiber Disintegrating Co.*, 90 U.S. 566 (1974); *American Fruit Growers v. Brogdex Co.*, 283 U.S. 1 (1931); *Funk Brothers Seed. Co. v. Kalo Innoculant Co.*, 33 U.S. 127 (1948); *Diamond v. Chakrabarty*, 206 U.S.P.Q. 193 (1980).

It is suggested that applicant use the language "a biologically pure culture" in connection with the strain to identify a product that is not found in nature and to indicate the hand of man.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-7, 9-13 and 26-27 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 1 and 7 are vague, indefinite and confusing in including a process step in a product claim in the recitation "is artificially inoculated with the endophyte culture".

The claims are also vague and indefinite in that the properties recited are in terms of and dependent upon the growth of the on a host grass and are not descriptive of the properties of the strains intended.

Claims 4-6, 10-13 and 26-27 are objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim may not depend on other multiple dependent claims and must be claimed in the alternative.. See MPEP § 608.01(n).

Claims 2-6, 9-13 and 26 and 27 objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c), as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. Applicant is required to cancel the claim(s), or amend the claim(s) to place the claim(s) in proper dependent form, or rewrite the claim(s) in independent form.

Claims 2-6 and 9-13 are drawn to further limitations of the effects of the product on unidentified host grasses, which effects appear to pertain to claims directed to a process of using the product, rather than to claims directed to the product *per se*, the subject under examination.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 1-13 and 26-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

The invention appears to employ a specific strains of *Neotyphodium coenophialum*. It is not clear if the written description is sufficiently repeatable to avoid the need for a deposit.

Further it is unclear if the starting materials were readily available to the public at the time of invention.

It appears that a deposit was made in this application as filed as noted on page 4 of the specification. However, it is not clear if the deposit meets all of the criteria set forth in 37 CFR 1.801-1.809. Applicant or applicant's representative may provide assurance of compliance with the requirements of 35 U.S.C § 112, first paragraph, in the following manner.

SUGGESTION FOR DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL

A declaration by applicant, assignee, or applicant's agent identifying a deposit of biological material and averring the following may be sufficient to overcome an objection and rejection based on a lack of availability of biological material.

1. Identifies declarant.
2. States that a deposit of the material has been made in a depository affording permanence of the deposit and ready accessibility thereto by the public if a patent is granted. The depository is to be identified by name and address.
3. States that the deposited material has been accorded a specific (recited) accession number.
4. States that all restriction on the availability to the public of the material so deposited will be irrevocably removed upon the granting of a patent.
5. States that the material has been deposited under conditions that access to the material will be available during the pendency of the patent application to one determined by the Commissioner to be entitled thereto under 37 CFR 1.14 and 35 U.S.C § 122.
6. States that the deposited material will be maintained with all the care necessary to keep it viable and uncontaminated for a period of at least five years after the most recent request for the furnishing of a sample of the deposited microorganism, and in any case, for a period of at least thirty (30) years after the date of deposit for the enforceable life of the patent, whichever period is longer.
7. That he/she declares further that all statements made therein of his/her own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true, and further that these statements were made with knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the instant patent application or any patent issuing thereon.

Alternatively, it may be averred that deposited material has been accepted for deposit under the Budapest Treaty on the International Recognition of the Deposit of Microorganisms for the purpose of Patent Procedure (e.g. see 961 OG 21, 1977) and that all restrictions on the availability to the public of the material so deposited will be irrevocably removed upon the granting of a patent.

Additionally, the deposit must be referred to in the body of the specification and be identified by deposit (accession) number, date of deposit, name and address of the depository and the complete taxonomic description.

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 1-13 and 26-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Waller *et al.* (2000. Tall Fescues With Novel Endophytes in Tennessee. In: Proceedings of 4th International Neotyphodium/Grass Interactions Symposium. Eds. V.H. Paul and P.D. Dapprich)

The claims are drawn to *Neotyphodium coenophialum* strains which are non-toxic for animals in conjunction with grasses.

The cited reference discloses *Neotyphodium coenophialum* strains which appear to be identical to at least one of the presently claimed strain (see, e.g., Results, Tables I and II) since they are non-toxic for animals in conjunction with grasses. The referenced microorganisms appear to be identical to at least one of the presently claimed strain and are considered to anticipate the claimed microorganism since they are disclosed as being found to live in similar plant tissue, are of the same species as that of the microorganisms claimed and are taught to be effective for the same purpose. Consequently, the claimed strains appear to be anticipated by the reference.

In the alternative, even if the claimed microorganisms are not identical to at least one the referenced microorganism with regard to some unidentified characteristics, the differences between that which is disclosed and that which is claimed are considered to be so slight that the referenced microorganisms are likely to inherently possess the same characteristics of the claimed microorganism particularly in view of the similar characteristics which they have been shown to share. Thus the claimed strains would have been obvious to those skilled in the art within the meaning of USC 103.

Accordingly, the claimed invention as a whole was at least *prima facie* obvious, if not anticipated by the reference, especially in the absence of evidence to the contrary.

Claims 1-13 and 26-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Smith *et al.*(X)

The claims are drawn to *Neotyphodium coenophialum* strains which are non-toxic for animals in conjunction with grasses.

The cited reference discloses *Neotyphodium coenophialum* strains which appear to be identical to at least one of the presently claimed strain (see, e.g., last page, col. 2) since they are non-toxic for animals in conjunction with grasses. The referenced microorganisms appear to be identical to at least one of the presently claimed strain and are considered to anticipate the claimed microorganism since they are disclosed as being found to live in similar plant tissue, are of the same species as that of the microorganisms claimed and are taught to be effective for the same purpose. Consequently, the claimed strains appear to be anticipated by the reference.

In the alternative, even if the claimed microorganisms are not identical to at least one the referenced microorganism with regard to some unidentified characteristics, the differences between that which is disclosed and that which is claimed are considered to be so slight that the referenced microorganisms are likely to inherently possess the same characteristics of the claimed microorganism particularly in view of the similar characteristics which they have been shown to share. Thus the claimed strains would have been obvious to those skilled in the art within the meaning of USC 103.

Accordingly, the claimed invention as a whole was at least *prima facie* obvious, if not anticipated by the reference, especially in the absence of evidence to the contrary.

Claims 1-13 and 26-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Matthews *et al.* (W)

The claims are drawn to *Neotyphodium coenophialum* strains which are non-toxic for animals in conjunction with grasses.

The cited reference discloses *Neotyphodium coenophialum* strains which appear to be identical to at least one of the presently claimed strain (see, e.g., Table 1) since they are non-toxic for animals in conjunction with grasses. The referenced microorganisms appear to be identical to at least one of the presently claimed strain and are considered to anticipate the claimed microorganism since they are disclosed as being found to live in similar plant tissue, are of the same species as that of the microorganisms claimed and are taught to be effective for the same purpose. Consequently, the claimed strains appear to be anticipated by the reference.

In the alternative, even if the claimed microorganisms are not identical to at least one the referenced microorganism with regard to some unidentified characteristics, the differences between that which is disclosed and that which is claimed are considered to be so slight that the referenced microorganisms are likely to inherently possess the same characteristics of the claimed microorganism particularly in view of the similar characteristics which they have been shown to share. Thus the claimed strains would have been obvious to those skilled in the art within the meaning of USC 103.

Accordingly, the claimed invention as a whole was at least *prima facie* obvious, if not anticipated by the reference, especially in the absence of evidence to the contrary.

Claims 1-13 and 26-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Bouton *et al.*, *Agronomy Journal*, vol. 94, pages 567-574 (2002)

The claims are drawn to *Neotyphodium coenophialum* strains which are non-toxic for animals in conjunction with grasses.

The cited reference discloses *Neotyphodium coenophialum* strains which appear to be identical to at least one of the presently claimed strain (see, e.g., Table 1) since they are non-toxic for animals in conjunction with grasses. The referenced microorganisms appear to be identical to at least one of the presently claimed strain and are considered to anticipate the

Art Unit: 1651

claimed microorganism since they are disclosed as being found to live in similar plant tissue, are of the same species as that of the microorganisms claimed and are taught to be effective for the same purpose. Consequently, the claimed strains appear to be anticipated by the reference.

In the alternative, even if the claimed microorganisms are not identical to at least one the referenced microorganism with regard to some unidentified characteristics, the differences between that which is disclosed and that which is claimed are considered to be so slight that the referenced microorganisms are likely to inherently possess the same characteristics of the claimed microorganism particularly in view of the similar characteristics which they have been shown to share. Thus the claimed strains would have been obvious to those skilled in the art within the meaning of USC 103.

Accordingly, the claimed invention as a whole was at least *prima facie* obvious, if not anticipated by the reference, especially in the absence of evidence to the contrary.

No claim is allowed.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Irene Marx whose telephone number is (571) 272-0919. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (6:30-3:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael G. Wityshyn can be reached on 571-272-0926. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Irene Marx/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1651